About DCU in the Community

- DCU in the Community is Dublin City University’s community-based learning centre, situated in the Shangan neighbourhood in Ballymun.
- We act as a bridge to higher education for the local community.
- We provide a range of access and foundation courses, learning supports, education guidance and advice on third level options.
- We support adult learners and mature students returning to education.
- We are DCU’s flagship Civic Engagement initiative, facilitating DCU-Community links and partnerships.
- We are active in Campus Engage, the national third level network for the promotion of civic engagement.
- We are co-funded by Dublin City University and Ballymun Regeneration Limited.

Find us on the Web: www.dcu.ie/community
Follow us on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/dcuinthecommunity

Our Centre

DCU in the Community is located in Shangan Neighbourhood Centre on Shangan Road in Ballymun.

- Our classroom can seat up to 25 students. Our computer facilities include 12 iMac computers, 12 PC/laptops all with the latest software, 2 projectors and wireless internet.
- Our centre is accessible to persons with disabilities and wheelchair users.

Our neighbours in Shangan Neighbourhood Centre:

- Ballymun Men’s Centre – the longest established men’s centre in Ireland
- Rediscovery Centre - upcycles furniture, clothes and bicycles to encourage and support sustainability and green living

The physical and social regeneration process continues in Shangan Road with blocks of flats being replaced by new homes and parks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Team</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Dr Helen McQuillan  
Development Officer | Ms Ann Dwyer  
Receptionist | |
| Ms Joanna Ozarowska  
Student Support and  
Access Officer | Dr Deiric O’Broin  
Chair,  
Civic Engagement  
Forum DCU | |
| Prof Ronnie Munck  
Head of Civic and  
Global Engagement  
DCU | Mr David Keating  
PhD Researcher | |
| Ms Natalja Matease  
Administrator | Ms Paula Lawlor  
Volunteer | |
| Ms Gemma McEnery  
Receptionist | Ms Theresa Gillen  
Tutor | |
Our Activities

**ENGAGEMENT:**
We promote civic engagement and university-community links

**ENTERPRISE:**
We promote volunteering which encourages students to take a leadership role in the community and demonstrate initiative and social enterprise

**TRANSFORMATION:**
Our motto is ‘Learning Changes Lives’. Raising educational aspirations and widening access and participation in higher education has a transformative impact on students and contributes to social regeneration

**TRANSLATION:**
Community-university dialogue, community-based learning and community based research translate into tangible benefits for the wider community

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Our Programmes

5.1 **Bridge to Higher Education**

Bridge to Education Programme offered at DCU in the Community has 3 tiers to serve as stepping stones towards further or higher education. Modules are flexible and run over 10 – 12 weeks:

- **Bridge to Education Foundation (currently FETAC L3 and L4)** seeks to assist participants in building basic academic skills and interest in further education
- **FETAC L5 modules (component awards)** aim at expanding participants’ knowledge, and study and research skills in a particular area
- **DCU campus links** provide participants with an opportunity to study on campus alongside DCU full-time students, familiarise themselves with third level lecture and tutorial formats, familiarise themselves with particular study areas, and engage with student life on campus.

From September 2010 to December 2011, 188 students enrolled on DCU in the Community’s Bridge to Higher Education Programme including 145 in year 2011. The completion rate averages 70%. In 2011, our Bridge to Higher Education Programme and progression options linked to the NFQ.

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Our Work Areas

**WIDENING PARTICIPATION**
- Bridge to Education programme
- Community Maths programme
- Summer school
- Learning supports & mentoring

**RAISING ASPIRATIONS**
- CAO information and advice
- Going to college seminars
- Student finance and grant applications
- DCU campus tours

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
- DCU – Community links
- Community partnerships
- Joint programme design
- DCU Civic Engagement Awards

**GOING TO COLLEGE**
- Advice & Guidance

**PROMOTING VOLUNTEERING**
- Volunteering at the centre, in local organizations, local schools and projects
- Research & knowledge exchange

**TRANSFORMATION**
- Learning Changes Lives
- Raising educational aspirations and widening access and participation in higher education has a transformative impact on students and contributes to social regeneration

**TRANSLATION**
- Community-university dialogue, community-based learning and community based research translate into tangible benefits for the wider community
5.2 FETAC Level 5 Modules

FETAC Level 5 programme was delivered in partnership with local education and training providers including Whitehall College of Further Education, Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA), and Ballymun Men’s Centre. Six FETAC Level 5 modules have been delivered since the centre reopened in September 2010. All FETAC Level 5 component awards feed into selected DCU modules and degrees.

94 students enrolled on FETAC Level 5 Modules programme across the 6 courses. The Level 5 modules offered included:

- **Introduction to Nursing**
  [Sept – Dec 2010: 18 students]
  - healthcare system in Ireland and the basics of the nursing profession

- **Marketing Practice**
  [Sept – Dec 2010: 7 students]
  - foundation to marketing principles and practice

- **Human Growth and Development**
  [Jan – Mar 2011: 19 students]
  - psychological, emotional, intellectual and physical development across lifespan

- **Social Studies**
  [Jan – Mar 2011: 15 students]
  - social issues, social structure, research skills

Retention rate for these courses was lower than the Bridge to Education Foundation, with 56% of students graduating.
A pilot Community Maths programme was launched in April 2011. Specific interventions, courses and events in 2011 included the following:

May 2011
- Maths Leaving Certificate grinds (all Maths levels): 15 students referred by local community groups, delivered by 6 volunteer tutors from Grant Thornton

June 2011
- Finance and Budgeting course: 17 students referred from Job Centre, 1 volunteer tutor from Grant Thornton delivered 5 week programme.

July 2011
- Maths for Parents of Primary School students: Pilot programme for Ballymun primary school parents and children

August 2011
- Drop in Sessions for DCU in the Community students due to begin/return to undergraduate courses within DCU

October 2011
- Two workshops held for 150 students: 90 secondary school students and 60 primary school students in conjunction with Maths Week Ireland and NRICH programme, University of Cambridge

November 2011
- Maths for Parents of Primary School students course

In September 2011 DCU in the Community partnered with the FAI, Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. and Whitehall College of Further Education to establish Ballymun as one of three pilot FUTSAL (Football Used Towards Social Advancement and Learning) hubs. PROJECT FUTSAL is a joint initiative between the Football Association of Ireland, the Welsh Football Trust and Interreg. The goal of FUTSAL is to provide education and work opportunities for people in disadvantaged areas and support community regeneration via employment and volunteerism in the field of sport.

The programme consists of an academic year of adult education, football coaching education, volunteering opportunities and work placements. 32 participants (16 male/16 female) were offered places on the course in September 2011. For DCU in the Community the programme provided an opportunity to reach a new student group – people passionate about sport and their local community.

For the academic year, participants study for a range of FETAC accredited modules in the area of General Education, Health, Fitness and Sport in the Community, as well as selected FAI modules, such as Coaching, Referee Education, and Strength and Conditioning. Additionally, the programme has a strong disability coaching and disability studies component. Students from DCU’s School of Health and Human Performance designed a series of Masterclasses for the programme for 2012. In this way, the Ballymun programme draws on DCU’s expertise in Sport, Health and Human Performance to introduce participants to state of the art sports education.
As a part of Bridge to Higher Education programme, DCU in the Community ran a Summer School in July 2011. The aim of Summer School programme was to reach a new student group and introduce them to DCU in the Community activities.

**Summer School Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>No of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Changes Lives</td>
<td>Building Self-Confidence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mature Student Experience</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s Talk About Health</td>
<td>Exploring Special Needs and Disabilities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding Epilepsy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs of the Elderly</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing Media Studies</td>
<td>Film Screening + Discussion</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photographing People + Portraits</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital Scrapbooking</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were referred by a number of local community organisations and groups, including Ballymun Men’s Centre, Ballymun Case Management, Ballymun Job Centre, Ballymun Women’s Resource Centre, Linx Project, and Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership.

6  **Our Students**

Since the centre reopened in September 2010, 188 students enrolled on DCU in the Community’s Bridge to Higher Education Programme.

DCU in the Community boasts a diverse student population. Our students range in age from 18 to 75. Half of our student body is aged between 23 and 40 years old, thirty percent are under 23 years of age and twenty percent are over 40.

Approximately 60% of our students are Ballymun residents, with the remainder from North Dublin – Santry, Finglas, Killbarrack, Coolock and Swords. Our students have a mixed educational background. Almost half of DCU in the Community students have completed second level education in Ireland or abroad, with 47% holding a Leaving Certificate (LC on graph) and 22% holding a Junior Certificate (JC on graph). Approximately 18% of our student body have also completed PLC courses, while 9% left education after primary school. There are significantly more women attending our courses with the male to female ratio being 3 : 7. Our students are predominantly (96%) Irish nationals, but other nationalities represented include Lithuanian, Polish, and Nigerian.

Perhaps the most striking statistics concerns our students’ economic status. Over 90% of our learners are unemployed and in receipt of social welfare benefits. The remaining 10% include students in part-time employment or working in Community Employment scheme.
7 Student Support and Mentoring

DCU in the Community provides a range of student mentoring and support services for students enrolled on in-house courses as well as external clients.

These services include:

- Study support: assignment and portfolio preparation, essay writing, research skills, additional one-to-one and group tutorials in communications, mathematics and information technology
- Education guidance: mature students, further and higher education options, information and advice, library of further and higher education prospectus and college offerings
- College applications: assistance with filling in CAO applications on paper and online, as well as direct applications to further and higher education, assistance in gathering necessary documents and writing personal statement and application letters
- Mature student interview preparation: information and advice, interview practice
- 3rd level finance applications: assistance with filling in Student Grant and BTEI forms for further and higher education for mature students and Leaving Certificate students
- Careers: CV and cover letter preparation assistance

8 Student Testimonials

“The course has enormously motivated me to continue my education because it has awoken my determination to further my studies without stopping.”

Paul
There is great encouragement and everybody is understanding.

David

Attending DCU in the community was the best personal decision I could have ever made. Initially I went to meet people and make friends. But it turned out to be so much more. It gave me the confidence to continue my education and realise I wasn’t as stupid as I thought I was. It is such a great launching pad into further education. I am now studying at DCU. The opportunities that are open to me there are endless. I am thoroughly enjoying it even though it is such a huge challenge. This was all due to the fact that I went to DCU in the Community. I would recommend that anyone try this free facility and see what you are capable of and how willing and helpful the staff are.

Janet

Going to DCU in the Community was really an experience and let me know that I CAN go on further and be a student for a degree.

Josephine

As a student I can say that DCU in the Community is the most helpful facility. The staff are very professional and always there to offer guidance. The advice I got from DCU in the Community helped me with my future choices and now I have been accepted for third level education in DCU. I can’t imagine myself being where I am now without assistance of DCU in the Community.

Maria

The course has made me more comfortable in a class setting.

Norah

DCU in the Community has become like a surrogate home with surrogate sisters for me. I would have never got as far as I did in All Hallows without the help of Helen, Joanna, Gemma, Ann, Natalja and Ronnie. DCU in the Community is a huge asset to Ballymun as it creates another way out, not like in Bono’s song “I can only see one way out”.

Sean
In 2011 our focus was on establishing DCU in the Community as a permanent and vital feature on the Ballymun education, training and social regeneration map.

This was done by developing a network of community links with a number of schools, education and training providers, community development groups and other local organisations and charities. Emphasis was put on mutual student referrals and running joint programmes and events. The chart below presents a selection of links established locally in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun Regeneration Ltd.</td>
<td>Co-funders of DCU in the Community; input into Social Regeneration plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member of Advisory Group and Management Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun Job Centre</td>
<td>Student referrals - progression for Job Centre students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring joint programme options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAFTA</td>
<td>Student referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint FETAC L5 Working with Groups programme offered from Sept 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BITE and Trinity Comprehensive School</td>
<td>Leaving Certificate student support and tuition (Irish, French, History)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student referrals and volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership</td>
<td>Education Working Group, Lifelong Learning Group, Intercultural Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballymun Education Fair, Ballymun Book Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun Men’s Centre</td>
<td>Student referrals and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring options to offer joint programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Action Plan</td>
<td>Green Living course and plant sale held at DCU in the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring options to offer joint programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAI</td>
<td>Ballymun Football Foundation Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course offered to 32 participants from North Dublin areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRYR</td>
<td>Joint induction/study skills course offered for BRYR’s FETAC L5 Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in Youthwork and student referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop in Well FRC</td>
<td>Working in partnership within Ballymun Intercultural Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteering on English conversational classes at Drop in Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDVEC</td>
<td>Joint ‘Going to College’ events and promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Venue for FUTSAL programme IT classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitehall College Of Further Education</td>
<td>Co-funding Bridge to Education programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Progression for DCU in the Community students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymun Intercultural Group</td>
<td>Co-organising English conversational classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistance with multicultural events in Ballymun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civic Engagement

DCU was the first university in Ireland to develop a Civic Engagement Strategy. DCU in the Community is the university’s flagship project. The National Strategy for Higher Education in Ireland and HEA strategic plan recognise the growing importance of civic engagement in third level. The National Strategy recognises the influence of DCU in the Community and its strong local community roots.

DCU President’s Awards for Civic Engagement are now an annual feature in the calendar. Organised and promoted by DCU in the Community, they honour staff and student contribution to their communities.

Promoting Volunteering

DCU promotes and supports volunteering to strengthen DCU-community links and civic engagement. At DCU in the Community we realise that volunteering raises the profile of Dublin City University in the local and surrounding areas. Between September 2010 and December 2011, more than 50 DCU students and staff volunteered on a number of community based projects in Ballymun, facilitated by DCU in the Community.

DCU in the Community staff and students regularly volunteer their time, skills and expertise on a number of projects, e.g. youthwork programmes, basketball coaching, community photography and strategic support to Limerick Communities Connect and Regeneration programmes.

Staff and students are also involved with overseas projects

Mark Moloney, student on Bridge to Education course travelled to Belarus in December 2011 to volunteer at an orphanage.

Theresa Gillen, tutor on Bridge to Education course, spent a month of December 2011 volunteering in Tanzania on Arusha Project.

DCU in the Community is involved in the organisation of DCU’s Volunteer Fair and regularly publicises volunteer opportunities in the centre and with Ballymun organisations.
The largest group of DCU in the Community students involved in volunteering in the local area are enrolled on the Ballymun Football Foundation Programme. 28 students have been delivering volunteer drop-in coaching sessions for children in the local schools and sports centres as well as assisting in the organisation of FAI Late Night Leagues in Ballymun and Finglas.

This student group has delivered almost 3000 volunteer coaching hours!

DCU in the Community students involved in a focus group session organised by BDI

DCU Links

DCU in the Community would like to thank all DCU Schools and Academic Support Units for the on-going interest in our activities and support for our centre in Ballymun. The table below provides an outline of some of the joint initiatives and programmes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Nursing</th>
<th>Business School</th>
<th>School of Education Studies</th>
<th>School of Law and Government</th>
<th>School of Communications</th>
<th>School of Health and Human Performance</th>
<th>Biomedical Diagnostics Institute (BDI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Involved in the delivery of DCU in the Community Summer School (3 members of academic staff) in July 2011</td>
<td>• Approximately 40 New Generation Management students volunteered on local community programmes and projects, as well as in schools</td>
<td>• Involved in the delivery of DCU in the Community Summer School in July 2011</td>
<td>• 2 EPL student-volunteers linked with Trinity Comprehensive School – Leaving Certificate study support</td>
<td>• 2nd Year Journalism students prepared a radio package on Ballymun, aired on DCU FM</td>
<td>• DCU in the Community held talks about Masterclasses for Ballymun Football Foundation Programme in July 2011</td>
<td>• Facilitated information session and demonstration in the BDI outreach centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health Action Event for DCU in the Community students and staff in February 2011 (8 members of academic staff)</td>
<td>• DCU in the Community students offered the option to undertake Introduction to Marketing module on campus</td>
<td>• Assisted in the organisation and development of Virtual Learning Environment induction workshop for mature students in September 2011</td>
<td>• Science Shop Community Forum was held at DCU in the Community</td>
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<td>• DCU in the Community presented the proposal for Masterclasses at School Board Meeting in October 2011</td>
<td>• Focus group on the social and ethical issues surrounding health science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DCU in the Community students offered the option to undertake Sociology of Health module on campus</td>
<td>• DCU in the Community delivered 2 talks on volunteering to Health and Society and Psychology students</td>
<td>• Student/graduate volunteers assisted in a number of DCU in the Community or local projects (study support)</td>
<td>• 5+ student and staff volunteers linked with Trinity Comprehensive School – Leaving Certificate Irish language support</td>
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<td>• DCU in the Community invited to present at Business in the Community event at DCUBS in May 2011</td>
<td>• Successful joint application for BenefiT3 funding for Intergenerational ICT project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint application to Learning Innovation Fund to develop foundation to Nursing Studies programme</td>
<td>• Health and Society and Psychology student-volunteers linked with local Ballymun schools, organisations and charities</td>
<td>• DCU in the Community invited to present at “Engage” event at DCUBS</td>
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<td>• DCU in the Community provided venue for Men’s Health Forum, St. Michael’s House</td>
<td>• Student/graduate volunteers assisted in a number of DCU in the Community or local projects (study support)</td>
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</table>
## Student Recruitment

Between September 2010 and December 2011, the majority of students were recruited through a system of referrals from local Ballymun organisations or groups, which was closely followed by word of mouth advertising (family members or friends). A large number of course places have also been taken up by past students who have already been linked with the centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Engagement and Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Access and Student Recruitment | Virtual Learning Training for Mature Students  
DCU Open Days  
Maths programme  
Student referrals |
| Information Systems and Services (ISS) | Installation of wireless internet infrastructure  
Technical support and troubleshooting |
| DCU Educational Trust | Facilitated engagement with corporate partner Grant Thornton |
| Grant Thornton | Support for Community Maths programme |
| President’s Office | President’s Awards for Civic Engagement  
Awards conferring at Graduation Ceremony |
| NorDubCo | Administrative and enterprise support to centre  
Chairing of DCU Civic Engagement Forum |
| DCU Sports | Facilitated student visits to sports centre and demonstrations of DCU elite sport support |
| DCU Library | Hosted library tours for DCU in the Community students |
| Registry | Administrative support and student registration |
Over the past year, a strong mutual referral system has been established and developed between DCU in the Community and a wide range of local organisations and groups. The students referred by local community organisations represent the most “college ready” group – people who have engaged with informal or formal education in the community, or have been clients of local education, training or counselling and guidance services for a number of years. The majority of referred students were also prepared to make a more long-term and full-time commitment to up-skilling and education. The charts below provides more detailed information about the referral network (September 2010 – December 2011).

22 of our students applied to a number of further and higher education programmes starting in September 2011; 13 applications to higher education (Level 7, 8 and 9 programmes at universities or Institutes of Technology; 9 applications to further education (FETAC Level 5 Awards at Colleges of Further Education). 19 students received offers (87%). The majority of our students are parents. Cost and the lack of part time study options are the biggest prohibitive factors.

Most DCU in the Community students progressing to higher education entered full-time undergraduate degrees at a number of higher education institutions, including Dublin City University and affiliated colleges,
Dublin Institute of Technology, National College of Ireland, Blanchardstown Institute of Technology, and NUI Maynooth. The higher education programmes span across all areas of humanities and sciences and include: Physics with Astronomy; Education and Training; Civil Law; Print Technology; Creative Digital Media; Business, HRM and Accounting; Community Development and Youth Work. For progression to further education, Post-leaving Certificate FETAC Level 5 Awards were the most popular choice, followed by Leaving Certificate qualifications, and included study areas such as: Education and Training; Film and Media Production; Counselling; Business and Finance; Nursing Studies; Film and TV Production.

Additionally, in 2011, our staff provided CAO and further education application assistance and advice, as well as third level grant application help to external clients, majority of whom were mature students.

The challenges include increasing the numbers progressing to third level and promoting access and foundation options in science and technology.

Looking to the Future: 2012 - 2016

The strategic priorities and academic focus of DCU in the Community will be refined with the support of the advisory group and address three key areas aligning DCU strengths and community needs:

- Maths and digital media: working with local schools, organisations, parents, students and teachers; good ICT infrastructure in the centre; digital communication aspect strongly emphasised within courses offered

- Community health and well-being: demand for courses offered in nursing, community health, healthcare support, psychology and wellbeing; much interest in community sports development

- Sustainable communities: exploring developing ‘green tech’ programmes; promoting the engagement of DCU with local environmental groups; exploring outreach science options to improve science knowledge and better campus-community science links or science shops

Widening participation, especially among mature students and student entering higher education through non-standard routes, is another strategic priority. DCU offers limited degree foundation/access options and further education/FETAC links; there is room for a consultation process on the role DCU in the Community can play in developing/supporting such progression options.

Quality assurance review processes for the Bridge to Higher Education Programme will also be undertaken.
The aim is to align the Programme more closely to NFQ, in line with best practice in the industry, and secure university certification for our courses.

A challenge is to mainstream and embed the centre’s activities within DCU. All DCU units need to feel a sense of ownership of DCU in the Community; this has improved in the past year but there is room for more engagement, designated link personnel and better DCU – community links.

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